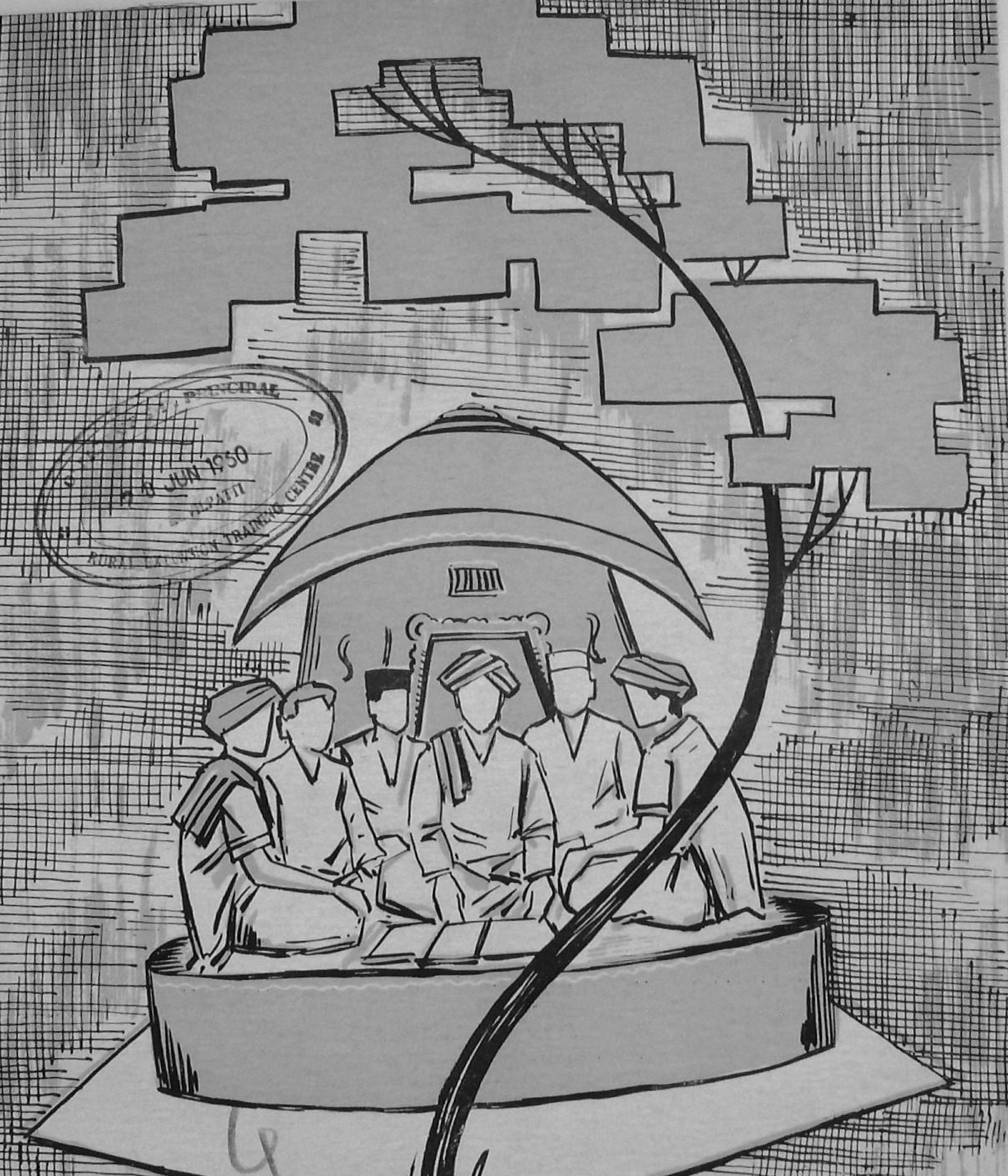

PRINCIPAL
8 JUN 1960
RURAL EXTENSION TRAINING CENTRE

PANCHAYATI RAJ

(*Incorporating Gram Sevak*)

Vol. I APRIL - 1960 No. 1

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PANCHAYATI RAJ

(Incorporating Gram Sevak)

CAITRA-VAISAKHA 1882

Vol. 1 **APRIL 1960** **No. 1**

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"PANCHAYATI RAJ"

THE PROGRAMME of Community Development started nearly eight years ago. Gram Sevak has been the functionary at the ground level. His was the mission to carry the gospel of the programme. His was the task to make it a reality in deeds. *Gram Sevak* was the journal started in August, 1954. Gram Sevaks from all corners of the country were to make the journal the meeting ground of ideas and experiences, of hopes and aspirations, of fears and misgivings.

GRAM SEVAKS did their best to make the journal their own. I am not sure that we, who are expected to guide them from Delhi, did our part. Nevertheless, things have happened. The programme did begin. It has broken the barriers that separated the people from the Government. It has given some help to people in all aspects of their life, even though the programme has created more expectations than it could fulfil.

THE PROGRAMME now enters a new chapter. The new chapter is Panchayati Raj. Panchayati Raj is a code of life. It is not Panchayat Raj which we knew in India as the unit of village Government. A village Government self-contained is a misfit in this sputnik age. We are familiar with joint family principle in India. Panchayati Raj is the expansion of the joint family principle in ever widening circle till it embraces the world and the cosmos. It is life rather than a mere segment of it.

WE HAVE had much appreciation of the programme at home and abroad. We have had more than our share, especially lately, of criticism for shortfalls and failings. Whether the programme merits appreciation or criticism, is however not so significant. What really matters is that within less than eight years, Government servant throughout the length and breadth of the country has recognised that in free democratic India, ultimate responsibility for running the affairs of life must vest in the people and their representatives. They have realised that their role is that of a public servant, not of the reflected master as in the days prior to independence.

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES have learnt that they are not to stand on the pulpit and give sermons or to hurl abuses on the Government. The realisation is dawning fast that their primary responsibility is one of guiding the Government agency in the implementation of programme approved by them in the Parliament, the State Legislature or in other institutions along the route.

PEOPLE HAVE begun to recognise that dependence on Government will not bring them freedom which independence from colonial rule was designed to usher. There is democracy in Parliament and State Legislature. But this is not going to endure unless from the Lok Sabha to the Gram Sabha there can be a continuing link. What is happening around us in many a land similarly placed as we were, is helping further to precipitate this realisation.

OUR PEOPLE in India owe a great deal to the Gram Sevaks, much more than the present generation is conscious of or is ready to concede. It is the Gram Sevaks more than any other who have made this growing realisation a possibility within the short span of seven to eight years. Panchayati Raj strikes a sympathetic cord in every heart in India. No other subject has aroused greater interest in the people during recent months. Credit for this is largely due to the functionary on the firing line and the people along-side.

Gram Sevak takes on a new name with this issue. *Panchayati Raj* we call it. The purpose is the same, but the scope is wider. The new journal is to be the mouthpiece not merely of Gram Sevaks but also of the people and their institutions, both representative and associate, from the village upwards. May *Panchayati Raj* grow to be the open forum for all alike. May it provide the impulse for the growing code of life that Panchayati Raj signifies. On this threshold of the new chapter, this is my hope and prayer.

Teaching Self-Help to People

Jawaharlal Nehru

THE ANDHRA and Rajasthan Governments have given a lead in the right direction by passing on the entire developmental responsibility to the Village Panchayats. This is a good way of teaching self-help to the people.

It is ultimately the people who by their own initiative, hard work and confidence can break the age-old shackles which have tied them to a life of poverty and ignorance. No Government machinery or army of officers can achieve this task. Centuries of grinding poverty and suppression have sapped the energy and initiative of the people. The main task of planning, therefore, is to restore their confidence in themselves and to curb their tendency to look to Government and officers for everything needed by them.

The experiment undertaken by the Andhra and Rajasthan Governments is a revolutionary one. The experiment has given the Panchayats revenue from tax collections and has entrusted them with the responsibility of bringing about their improvements. The experiment has already created a new atmosphere in the rural areas of those States. Villagers there are no longer running after Ministers and officials for getting their work done. The experiment should be adopted in other States of India. Whatever ideology the country may adopt, whether it is capitalism, socialism, or communism, the problems in rural area could only be solved by the twin principle of hard work and cooperation. This can be done only when people start taking interest in their own affairs and can be done through spread of education. By education is meant creation of technicians and engineers who would take pride in working with their hands and who would cultivate land and improve the methods of cultivation.

The great disparity between rural and urban life must go. I had once referred to India as a country just entering the bicycle age. I said that because the bicycle is the only modern machine that has entered villages. The bicycle was a great novelty when my father about 60 years ago, brought it for me. Now it has become an ordinary thing. There might be several modern machines and gadgets found in Indian cities but so long as they have not made any impact on the village life, India can not be said to have entered the modern age of industry.

The village, should therefore, be the standard by which India's progress should be judged. The progress of the village should be judged from the extent to which the people have learnt to be self-reliant and have improved their life.

The experiment of community blocks is meant to achieve that purpose. It has undoubtedly achieved a good success but here again the old malady of people looking to Government for everything has raised its ugly head. It is in that context that the experiment in Andhra and Rajasthan is welcome and in that the responsibility of development has been squarely put on the shoulders of village Panchayats. If Gram Panchayats become active and begin planning and executing their own plans, the picture of rural India would be changed within a few years. If on the contrary the work was left to the Government machinery and if the machinery started doing the work in its usual way, many years would pass without accomplishing the task. (*Based on a recent speech at Rajkot*).

WHY THIS CHANGE OF TITLE ?

WITH THIS ISSUE, this Journal marks a new stage of development. Since August 1954, *Gram Sevak* has been serving in its own humble way the field-workers, not merely at the ground level but very many others who are deeply and intimately interested in the ground level work under the Community Development programme. Today the programme has expanded both in its scope and content, in its area of coverage and the strength of its personnel, in its visible impact and in its invisible influences.

NEW ENTRANTS

From a small channel meandering through rocky valleys and towering mountains, the stream has now gathered volume and depth and has reached the fertile plains. Till recently the Gram Sevak used to be the most important ground level functionary under the programme. But today the principal agents of developmental activity and social change are the non-official leaders at the village, Block and District level under the new scheme of Panchayati Raj. No doubt the work of the Gram Sevak has increased in volume and significance but there are a vast number of others who have now entered the field; and these are dedicated to the same cause. Village leaders, Panches, Sarpanches, Pradhans and workers in the cooperative fold are only a few of the categories of new workers in the expanding field of Community Development and Panchayati Raj. The function of this Journal will henceforth be to serve as a forum to all these new workers including the Gram Sevaks.

Panchayati Raj is a natural consequence of Community Development. *Panchayati Raj* is thus the direct descendant of *Gram Sevak*. But problems arising from Panchayati Raj vary from State to State. One central journal for the entire country will not be able to give the readers a perspective picture of the developments taking place in the different regions where conditions vary vastly.

LANGUAGE EDITIONS

What is attempted here will be nothing more than a symbolic documentation of events in the field and a discussion of events far remote from the field of occurrence. Every State will therefore have its own *Panchayati Raj* journal in its regional language offering its readers an intimate forum for discussion of Panchayati Raj problems. Some States have already started issuing such journals, though under different titles. But they will ultimately conform to the general pattern envisaged in the recommendations of the last Mysore Conference on the subject.

When every State had started its own regional Journal, devoted partly to national developments and partly to its own State activities, it will be possible for the Central journal *Panchayati Raj* to take advantage of these and offer to our readers a more accurate account of what is happening in the different parts of the country under the Panchayati Raj programme.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

It will be easy to get progress reports and success stories from the States. But the function of this Journal will be something very much more than serving as a forum for such material. Our primary objective would be to reflect as intimately as possible the day-to-day experiences of Panchayati Raj workers and bring to the surface their primary difficulties and basic frustrations. The solutions evolved in the field would equally be highlighted. Just as the programme of Community Development is now being handed over to the non-official leaders of the community, the content of this Journal would be largely sustained by contributions in the form of articles, letters, questions and suggestions, coming directly from the field. Such contributions are now proposed to be paid for by a token honorarium.

Panchayati Raj is an integrated programme under which the all-round development of the community is attempted. There are bound to be many obstacles, failures and disappointments. But these will take their proper place only when one tries to get an integrated picture of the community as a whole. Such an integrated picture—however

(Continued on page 5)

HE RESIGNED FROM OFFICE TO BECOME A PRADHAN

VIDUR

FORTY-TWO YEAR old Shri Shanti Sarup Tyagi of village Burari, has recently been elected the Chairman of the Block Development Committee of Alipur Block in the Union Territory of Delhi. Not very long ago he had served in the same Block as a Gram Sevak.

I had known Shri Tyagi for a long time and from what I knew of him it was not difficult for me to appreciate the reasons why he had been elected by the village people. He is one of those rare persons gifted with a natural desire to serve his fellowmen. I had sensed this quality in him early when I was appointed as the Project Executive officer, Alipur, the first Block in the country formally inaugurated by the Prime Minister in 1952. I thought Shri Tyagi would shape into an ideal Gram Sevak. But would he agree to serve in that capacity which is considered to be the lowest in the official hierarchy? I hesitated because the proposal was certainly not a paying one in the ordinary sense of the term. Shri Tyagi enjoyed a respectable status in the rural area. Besides, he had built up a satisfactory homeopathic practice. But I argued within myself that money and social status are not the only things that matter in one's life. But are not duties and responsibilities of a Gram Sevak as onerous and important as those of any other ground-level worker? I took courage and talked it over with Shri Tyagi. He saw my point quickly and agreed to serve the country and the people as a Gram Sevak.

Shri Tyagi's outstanding achievements as a Gram Sevak justified my earlier hopes and confidence in him. He became the natural leader of the twenty and odd Gram Sevaks in the Block who looked up to him for help and guidance. He proved a tower of strength to me. He had a knack of steering clear of all ideological and impractical suggestions and coming to grips with hard realities. I remember how at the time of monthly meetings, he would voice the complaint that they were required to submit far too many reports and that the system of framing targets and achievements had a corrupting influence on the Gram Sevaks in as much as they tended to give imaginery figures. Development of agriculture and animal husbandry interested him most. He encouraged vegetable-growing and fruit-gardening in his circle since fruits and vegetables found a ready market in the capital close by.

After his election as the Chairman of the B.D.C., he came to see me a few days ago. We had met after a period of five years. I congratulated him on his new mission and asked him the secret of his success. He replied, "The strategy of my election was simple. I left my election issue to the unanimous decision of the Gram Sabha and abided by it. I also scrupulously kept myself away from any political party. I am of the view that elections under the Panchayati Raj should be fought on non-party basis. I toured on cycle and contacted personally all the Sarpanches and Panches of the 70 villages of my Block. This had its own effect."

I inquired of him the circumstances that led him to seek the election. In an animated tone he described how the bureaucratic attitude of the administrators had forced him to resign his post of Gram Sevak. He said, "Last year due to the construction of the Shahdara Bund, the floods in the Jamuna had affected adversely a dozen villages in my circle and the surrounding area. It was a vast sheet of water all round and the villagers along with their cattle had to come out of their villages for safety. Thousands of starving cattle and villagers remained on the open roadside for three days waiting for some Government relief. But none came. We also met the Mayor and the Corporation authorities but to no effect. Seeing no other alternative course left, I advised the villagers to march with their cattle to the residence of the Deputy Commissioner and the Mayor. This unique demonstration of thousands of

famished cattle and villagers through the streets of the capital had its effect and the authorities sprang into action. The reserved wastelands on the Ridge road were thrown open for the cattle to graze till the emergency was over. Other relief measures soon followed. The authorities nowhere like to be hustled into action against their wishes. I was spotted out to be the mainspring behind the demonstration and soon the punishment followed. My presence in my circle was considered dangerous and so I was ordered to be transferred to some other place. This I did not like and so resigned in protest."

This episode set me thinking and I came to the conclusion that perhaps under these circumstances the proposed 'Panchayati Raj' was the only solution of the evils of bureaucracy and the attendant evils in a centralised administration. And so I suggested to Shri Tyagi that he should now be happy that under the new set-up of 'Panchayati Raj', he will occupy a key position and will have considerable freedom and power to do good for the villagers. Shri Tyagi became thoughtful and pensive for a while and then breaking the silence remarked, "Alas! I don't think things will be so easy as that. The apathy of the administration seems to be eternal and does not give in at any stage." "What do you mean?" I asked. He added, "I have been selected the Chairman for some months now. I have even undergone the training meant for Pramukhs at Nilokheri. But I have not become an effective Chairman of the B.D.C. so far. It all seems to be on paper. No one has bothered to communicate to me officially the nature of my new duties and responsibilities and my relationship with the B.D.O and his team."

"What is your idea about the Panchayati Raj? Will it succeed?" I asked him. He replied emphatically. "The Panchayati Raj is a step in the right direction and it is bound to succeed. Of course, difficulties there would be. These should be faced squarely and overcome." Continuing, Shri Tyagi added, "I believe that power is never given, it is snatched. The more vigilant and active the villagers, the better able they would be to wield power under the new scheme of things, and the official hierarchy will be shown its proper place."

WHY THIS CHANGE OF TITLE?

(Continued from page 3)

feeble and incomplete it may be—is being attempted through the pages of this new Journal. There is plenty of activity going on all over the country under different facets of this programme. But planning has so far stopped at the official level. It is the people's planning and the thinking of the non-official leaders which needs to be focussed into a recognisable pattern. The language editions of *Panchayati Raj* which will be brought out by the States will provide the necessary forum. It is therefore the primary responsibility of the Panches, Sarpanches and Pradhans to help this Journal at the Centre and in the States grow up to a stature worthy of the new edifice of Panchayati Raj.

No movement can work out its destiny without such organs of public opinion. While heavy construction projects move ahead with the help of blueprints and expert opinion, the working of the Panchayati Raj would depend solely on the thinking of the large masses of people involved in the programme. Indeed, the future of this Journal is bound up very much with the successful working of the scheme of Panchayati Raj. I hope it will be equally true to say that its growth as a dependable organ of public opinion would provide a reasonable yard-stick for measuring the success of the new work which awaits us in the field.

—D.R.

GANDHIJI'S DREAM

B. MEHTA

VILLAGE PANCHAYATS in India have formed an integral part of our national life from time immemorial. Valmiki's Ramayana refers to the existence of the Janapada, a federation of Village Republics. These institutions which developed during the earliest times in this country have survived the wreck of dynasties and downfall of Empires. These institutions were once living centres of direct and real democracy and our village communities were little republics having nearly everything they needed.

While the first Five Year Plan emphasised the necessity of closely associating the people with the Development programmes, the Second Five Year Plan gave special attention to the development of Local Government in rural areas. This emphasis resulted in the establishment of nearly 1.75 lakh Panchayats. But a large number of them could not function effectively. The lack of efficiency has been due, according to the Balwantrai Mehta Team report, to too large a jurisdiction, too few powers and absence of close relationship with the Government and the political parties.

Another important finding of the team was that one of the least successful aspects of Community Development and National Extension Service work was its attempt to evoke popular initiative. The team, therefore, recommended the creation of representative and democratic institutions which would supply the local interest, supervision and care necessary to ensure that expenditure conforms with the needs and wishes of the people. After arriving at these findings, the team recommended a three tier scheme. At the bottom a directly elected village panchayat. At the intermediate level an indirectly elected Panchayat Samiti. At the top a Zila Parishad to supervise and coordinate the work of the Panchayat Samitis. The Team recommended devolution of powers at Block level. Some regard district level as more suitable. One need not be dogmatic over this point. Every area could make its experiment. These recommendations were generally approved by the National Development Council and the States were left to work out details to suit their own conditions.

This devolution of powers is necessary because democracy is hostile to centralization. Freedom must manifest itself immediately and on the spot. To canalise it into a single channel is to destroy its spontaneity and make it unreal. Modern thinkers believe that the road to a better society is through decentralisation. So we are on the threshold of a great change. The power to determine what is good and conducive to their progress is going back to the people to whom it really belongs. Such a change is the logical consequence of our acceptance of faith in democracy where people's will is to be supreme over everything. This step of decentralising democracy cannot be in the nature of a mere experiment.

More than eighty per cent of the country's population live in the villages. And so if village communities are denied the right to participate directly in their local government and in their welfare programmes in their own small areas, this would take away much from the meaning of democracy and people's government. Assigning to the villagers the responsibility of managing through their representative local organisations not only affairs of day-to-day administration but also of planning and executing their local programmes, is just helping them to come into their own. This will work towards the realisation of Gandhiji's dream of a free India.

LOK SABHA DEBATE

The problems and questions which are generally discussed at our Panchayat and Panchayat Samiti meetings were fully discussed for two days recently by the Lok Sabha. The occasion was provided by the annual budget debate relating to the Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation. Our Panches, Sarpanches and Pradhans would find in the following extracts from the debate many points of view concerning the day-to-day working of the Community Development programme and the Panchayati Raj.—Ed.

Shri Raghubir Sahai opening the discussion, said the establishment of 2,708 blocks all over the country by the end of 1959, covering about 3,60,000 villages with a population of a little over 179 million was a creditable record. He added that as they are about to enter the Third Plan, the Ministry should do a little amount of rethinking and it is necessary that, instead of laying emphasis on expansion, attention should be turned towards consolidation of the programme already undertaken.

At the block level, he said, there was "tug of war" between the Block Development officer and the Extension officer. The responsibility of the B.D.O. should be fixed and he should be given full responsibility to carry on the work.

Shri K. T. K. Tangamani said that the rate of expansion should be limited to 300 blocks a year and better training should be given to the staff and their efficiency should be increased. He said that the development blocks had failed to reach their agricultural targets, and there was more attention to welfare activities than to economic activities in the blocks.

Mrs. Uma Nehru congratulated the Ministry on the success it had achieved in bringing about a change in the life of the rural community and pleaded for encouragement to the formation of co-operative marketing societies to help those engaged in agriculture and small-scale industries. She said that, if Panchayats and co-operatives were to be successful, steps should be taken to strengthen Gram Panchayats and give land to the landless according to their needs. Women should be made more development-conscious as they would have to play a greater role in the welfare work. She suggested opening of a post office and a savings bank in every block area.

Shri Amar Singh Saigal said that though about 22 lakh Gram Sahayaks had been trained till now, it was doubtful whether they were devoting the necessary time to their main work. The State Governments should look into the matter.

Shri Vishwanath Reddy said that much of the criticism would not be there if it was realised that the Ministry was not for creating assets in rural areas, but for generating a feeling of self-help to make the task of reconstruction smooth. To say that the community development programme should be given up because it had not generated much popular enthusiasm was a counsel of despair. He said that much of the popular allergy was due to the attitude of Revenue officials who had been transferred to the community development department.

Sardar Ajit Singh wanted a minimum educational qualification should be fixed for sarpanches. They should be at least matriculates, he said.

Dr. K. B. Menon said that a "tussle" was going on between officials and non-officials in blocks in which the officials had the "upper hand" till now. He said that the seminars held by the C.D. Administration were serving little purpose to enthuse the people in villages. He suggested that postal tuition for extension courses should be started, at least in States like Kerala where the percentage of literacy was high. The co-operative law should be so amended, he added, as to ensure that the cooperative was a "member-controlled institution".

Shri Onkarlal said the Ministry had achieved good pro-

gress in providing various amenities to the rural population and encouraging the cooperative movement among them. It had, however, not been successful in the field of agriculture. He wanted the training of village level workers to be improved to ensure that they were able to provide the rural people with an effective leadership.

Shri Pannalal Barupal said the scheme of Panchayati Raj and delegation of more powers to elected bodies had largely shown good results. It would now be desirable to extend it to elected bodies in urban areas like municipalities. He wanted Government to prohibit persons, not engaged in the concerned trade, from acquiring interests in the co-operatives.

Shri S. A. Mehdi said that while the Ministry had done valuable work towards uplift of the villages, it had taken more work on its hand than it could possibly handle. The result was, he said, the B.D.O. whose work extended from irrigation to health had to depend for everything on the direction of the district officials. Moreover, he said, owing to the nature of the set-up, by the time the programme of the Centre reached the block through the State, the B.D.Os, were unable to translate the programme of the Ministry.

Shri Jwala Prasad Jyotishi said the villages had been neglected for long years and the period of seven years in which the community development movement had worked was not sufficiently long to record spectacular progress. All the same, the achievements of the Ministry were not small. In course of time, these would be clearly noticeable.

Shri H. C. Mathur said the Ministry had vitality and honest intentions to go ahead. Most of the reports about community development though of recent origin, were becoming obsolete because they are moving so fast. The Balwantrai Mehta Committee's recommendation for devolution of authority to villages was very significant but Rajasthan had gone far ahead of this report with its decentralisation scheme. One of the criticisms levelled in the reports against the Ministry was that the right type of officers with real rural background was not available. But from where could these officers be got? he asked. Another important criticism was that the Ministry had failed to encourage the people to take the initiative. Was this the failure of the Ministry and the official hierarchy or the failure of non-officials including us?

Shri A. C. Guha opposed the suggestion for staggering the community development programme and said the entire country should be covered as quickly as possible. The backward regions should receive the first priority but the position was to the contrary. He felt that the problem of coordination would be solved to a great extent if the Panchayat system was fully implemented. The difficulty at present was that every officer was eager about his own kingdom and would not tolerate any non-official sharing his authority. If power was transferred to the Panchayats, coordination would be easier.

Shri Shambhu Charan said that the subsidies and grants for construction of wells and tanks did not reach the villagers in time because the B.D.O. was saddled with too many responsibilities and he was unable to devote time to actual development work.

Shri A. P. Jain commended the work done by the Ministry in the sphere of democratic decentralisation and the steps it had taken regarding the training of all categories of personnel connected with the Community Development work. The scheme of democratic decentralisation would lead to people taking the initiative and shouldering the responsibility not only for planning but for execution.

Shri Jain wated soil analysts and chemists to be appointed to every block or two. The soil conditions varied from place to place and no uniform formula evolved under some laboratory condition could be helpful.

LETTERS

Lady Workers in Rural Areas

Sir,

Six years ago when my husband was posted as a Block Development Officer, I was glad to get an opportunity to do my little bit for the village development work. A year later I was elected as a Lady S.E.O. A high authority had given me an assurance that I would be required to serve only in the same Block where my husband was posted. Actually this undertaking was not forthcoming in writing and consequently I could not take up the job. In the absence of a lady S.E.O., I continued to look after the organisation of women's welfare work in the Block honorarily. On account of the prevailing *purdah* system it often becomes difficult for the male members of the Block team to deal with Gram Lakshmis or the women attending their classes. I have enjoyed the life and work in rural areas, but my experience and observation confirm that I had done the right thing in refusing the job of a lady S.E.O. without the undertaking mentioned above. The centuries old tradition of segregation in most parts of our country and the consequent lack of any norms of behaviour towards women other than one's relatives, make it difficult for an unescorted lady to work in villages with self-respect among unrelated men folk. The general behaviour of the male colleagues and officers and the rural public towards unescorted lady workers in the Blocks is not what it should be. Village leaders who had been persuaded to make accommodation available for the Gram Sevikas, often misused this obligation by treating them like maid-servants. Instances of misbehaviour towards them by the male members of the host family are not infrequent. Only the Gram Lakshmis who generally work and teach in their own village, are usually able to carry on their classes undisturbed. These difficulties which seriously hamper the women's welfare programme in rural areas may be overcome in two ways. Firstly, either local women workers should be posted or only those outside Lady workers may be appointed in the Block where their husbands are employed. Alternatively, the women's welfare programme should be merged with and centred round the girls' educational institutions and the lady teachers.

Yours etc.

(*Mrs.*) *Kamla Vacher,*

27-3-60

Lar (Dist. Deoria, UP)

Our Statistics

Sir,

I am regularly going through the literature published by you in connection with the C.D. programme. In the December, 1959 issue of *Gram Sevak* under the column "Our Post Box" I read about the accounts mentioned regarding the people's contribution and other statistical record.

But practically it has been found that the Programme Assistants are working as compilers of statistics at the Block level. They are helpless in so far as the accuracy of statistics is concerned because they are not expected to carry out on-the-spot checking.

If the Programme Assistants working at Block level truly represent the Administrative Intelligence department they should be given more facilities and powers to enable them to do justice to their role.

Yours etc.

Shridhar Rajya Joshi

9-2-60

Anand Bhavan,

Dhar, M.P.

Village School Teacher

Sir,

The school teacher in India is one of the most poorly paid employees. Perhaps in no other part of the world is a school teacher paid as little attention as here. Yet he is expected to build the nation by moulding the minds and character of the youths. Besides in the context of the present day economic development of the country, he is expected to play a vital role. The school is recognised as one of the three basic institutions of the village. By virtue of his educational background, he is expected to be the natural leader of the village community. But all these high

expectations from the school teacher have failed to materialise so far. To blame the teacher for this is to put the cart before the horse. The proper conditions in which the teacher can function effectively are still wanting. Unless his pay is suitably increased and the age-old respectability of his status is restored, we cannot expect him to deliver the goods. It is only when he comes into his own that he can be involved more actively and effectively in the development work. There is not the least doubt that with his cooperation the Social Education programme could make better progress and the Community Centres would be run more systematically. He can prove to be of great help in enabling the panches to discharge their functions properly so that the experiment of Panchayati Raj is rendered successful.

Yours etc.

15-3-60 *G. Ramachandran*
Coimbatore.

Rural Godowns

Sir,

Rural godowns continue to be the exclusive responsibility of the cooperative marketing societies. Even the primary village societies who are keen to have their own godowns are being denied the Central assistance. This discriminatory policy of the Government is detrimental to the creation of a spirit of leadership as well as self-reliance. When sharing the responsibility with the largest number possible has been the avowed policy of the Community Development movement why make an exception in the case of cooperation? The present policy, therefore, needs reconsideration and alteration. Village societies which are efficient and economically sound should be encouraged to own their own godowns. The only condition should be that in such cases the society undertaking the responsibility of owning the godown should extend the storage facilities to the neighbouring villages whenever possible.

Yours etc.

13-2-60 *Suraj Bhan*
Ajmer

The Master Key

Sir,

The value of compost manure in enriching soil fertility has been known for a long time now, but the failure to utilise the cowdung for compost purposes has also been of equal standing. The work of sweeping houses clean and removing cowdung is largely done by ladies in the rural area. It occurred to some of us working in the programme that as in several other household affairs, they might play the decisive role in this matter as well. Consequently, the Panchayat Samiti, Pisagan was prevailed upon to hold a 3-day training camp for training village ladies in proper utilisation of cowdung and house sweeping for making compost. The response was encouraging. Out of 40 ladies invited to the camp, 25 attended. The 'why and how' of making compost was explained and demonstrated to them in a simple and clear manner. Most of the ladies being illiterate, the teaching was imparted with the help of charts, maps, models and other audio-visual aids. The camp helped in arousing considerable interest amongst the ladies for compost making. This enthusiasm is now being kept alive by a suitable follow-up programme. It might well turn out to be the master key to the solution of the vexed problem of utilisation of cowdung for compost making which has proved elusive so far.

4-4-60 Yours etc.
Pisagan, *S. N. Sharma*
Rajasthan S.E.O.

Study Tours

Sir,

Groups of progressive farmers are periodically taken round on Bharat Darshan tours and visits to important Development Projects. This practice has been found to be very useful and effective in as much as it induces some of them to take to improved practices which they have seen while on tour.

Will it not be in the fitness of things if Gram Sevaks too are likewise taken round on study tours to model Blocks in other parts of the country? I am sure this will do immense good to the Gram Sevaks and equip them to carry out their allotted duties more intelligently and efficiently.

5-4-60 Yours etc.
Zirapur Block, *O. L. Sharma,*
M.P. *Gram Sevak*

Shri V. S. Karjigi receiving the award from the Union Minister for Community Development and Co-operation

Best Gram Sevak of the Year

(By Our Special Correspondent)

SHRI V. S. KARJIGI, village level worker from Mysore State was presented the other day at a simple ceremony with a brand new cycle and Rs. 2,270 in the form of National Small Savings Certificates by the Union Minister for Community Development and Co-operation. He had been adjudged the best Gram Sevak in the country. For him, it was no doubt the happiest and proudest moment of his life. My thoughts however, turned to the far-off Alur village and its vicinity where Shri Karjigi had been working amongst the simple village folk. I wondered if during the course of his work amongst the villagers, he ever dreamt of visiting Delhi in his life time. But here he was, having visited Delhi three times during a short period in connection with his selection as the best Gram Sevak. My question whether he considered himself to be lucky that way, however. left him cold and it was clear that to Shri Karjigi visiting a city like Delhi was not a matter of any significance. But for the Khadi suit with the Sales Depot stamp mark still fresh on it, which obviously he had got ready-made for the occasion, he was every inch a villager—so simple, unostentatious and informal in his manners! He is content to live and work amongst the villagers. He has taken to village life as a fish takes to water. It soon became clear to me that it was essentially this rural frame of his mind that helped him to work successfully amongst the villagers. It was this criterion which weighed predominantly with the judges at various levels to select him as the best Gram Sevak in the country.

He was first selected by the Block Selection Committee consisting of the BDO and important non-officials of the block, then at the District level by the District Selection Committee including M.L.A.s, district officers and social workers and finally by the State Selection Committee consisting of the Development Commissioner and leading public workers. Next, he came to Delhi along with 15 other Gram Sevaks from various States, and was considered to be the best amongst the best from various States. At the primary

selection levels, the emphasis was more on achievement of physical targets, primarily of agricultural production. But at the State and national levels, recognition was given to the fact whether he had the proper attitude of mind to work with the villagers. Judged from both these standards, he came out to be successful.

Shri Karjigi was born and brought up in village environments. Having matriculated at the age of 19, he underwent the agricultural training course for two years before he joined as Gram Sevak in 1957. On the Davanagere Block being inaugurated in October the same year, he was transferred and posted in the Alur circle consisting of 11 villages. He had served for about 2½ years only, when the spectacular developments achieved by him in this area brought him the well-earned recognition of being the best Gram Sevak of India. I was interested to know his outstanding achievements in various fields. And so in all humility he began to describe his work. I soon found out that it was in the field of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry that he had made his mark. He said, "I have been able to introduce amongst a majority of 1,500 and odd farmers improved agricultural practices such as proper use of compost, green manure and fertilisers, improved seeds, introduction of Japanese method of cultivation and dribbling of jowar. As a result, the crop yield of jowar, Ragi and paddy has gone up considerably." He further described the steps he took to improve poultry and cattle. According to him, there are now in his circle 4,945 improved birds of the white leg horn variety. There are six service cooperative societies now as against only one when he took over. About 92% of the farmers are now members of these Cooperative Societies. These and other figures that Shri Karjigi gave are no doubt very pleasing and as the Minister remarked, "Shockingly too good"! What surprised me most was the singular success that he claimed in respect of the compost pits which he said were properly and regularly operated by nearly 84% of the farmers. Finding me inquisitive, he replied that he had attained the success by continuous persuasion as well as by encouraging the planting of "survey" tree which provides enough fuel in 2 years' time.

"What has been the secret of your success with the villagers?" I asked, trying to discover the "open sessame" of the programme. Without a moment's hesitation, he replied, "It is to identify oneself with the people whom you are called upon to serve". Illustrating this point from his own life, he said "For the first four months I did not do anything tangible. I only made an intensive tour of the villages, developed personal contacts with the people and tried to assess their requirements. I decided to concentrate my efforts on increasing food production. In order to persuade the farmers to take to improved agricultural practices, I relied mainly on demonstration plots which to start with I planned only one at Alur, my circle Headquarter and then went on increasing their numbers as their demand grew up. Alongside, I formed 10 Young Farmers Clubs to train the young and educated persons who in their turn helped me to win over the adult farmers to new improved practices. I addressed myself particularly to the middle class farmers. After some time, there were at least 4 or 5 farmers in each village who carried on model farming. In course of time, these progressive farmers were trained as Gram Sahayaks who helped me in inducing other farmers to the improved practices."

I understand that Shri Karjigi along with 14 other Gram Sevaks who were adjudged the best in their respective States are shortly meeting in a seminar in New Delhi. It is a welcome idea in as much as it will provide an opportunity to the best of our Gram Sevaks to exchange ideas and benefit from each other's valuable experiences. It will be a good occasion also for those who draw up plans from above to come into contact with them on the ground level who have done outstanding work in the field. Suitable prizes have also been announced for those Gram Sevaks who stand first in the State and District level competition.

1959-60

It is not always that figures speak for themselves. But behind these cold figures as given in the annual report of the Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation is unfolded an epic drama of millions of people living in our villages. When we struggle through such figures in this report we should take great care to remember the human beings behind them.

MORE THAN 179 million, or about 61 per cent of the total rural population of the country, had come within the orbit of the Community Development programme by October 2, 1959, according to the Annual Report of the Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation for 1959-60. The programme on that date extended to 2,708 (in addition to 403 pre-extension) Blocks.

People's voluntary contribution in cash, kind and labour from the beginning of the programme in 1952 to September 30, 1959 amounted to Rs. 79.78 crores, as against the total Government expenditure of Rs. 153.97 crores. Of the total Government expenditure, Rs. 107.09 crores were spent during the first 3½ years of the Second Five Year Plan.

22 LAKH GRAM SAHAYAKS TRAINED

Up to September 30, 1959, about 22 lakh Gram Sahayaks had been trained for the extension of improved methods of cultivation and for the execution of agricultural production programmes. Improved seeds distributed till September 30, 1959, totalled 2,33,88,000 maunds, the corresponding figure for chemical fertilizers being 5,54,57,000 maunds. Agricultural demonstrations held numbered 73,38,000.

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

Under the Village and Small Industries programme, a scheme for the supply of improved tools at subsidised cost to village blacksmiths and carpenters has been initiated for implementation in 20 per cent of the blocks during the Second Plan period. Another scheme has been initiated, in collaboration with the All-India Handicrafts Board, for starting arts and crafts museums in about 80 selected C.D. blocks.

To enable the functionaries of Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads to help execute health programmes, like general cleanliness of the village, according to the Report, health education has been included in their training programmes.

EDUCATION

In States like Rajasthan, where Panchayati Raj has already been introduced, the Panchayat Samitis and the Panchayats have begun to take interest in enrolling children in village schools and in welfare programmes for them.

The 43 Multipurpose Tribal Blocks, adds the Report, made greater progress during the year under report. Initial difficulties have been largely overcome, and the staff position has improved considerably.

Rural Housing surveys have been conducted in about half of the 1,600 villages selected for rural housing. A sum of Rs. 205 lakhs was allotted for 1959-60, as against Rs. 50 lakhs placed at the disposal of the State Governments since the inception of the programme up to the end of March, 1959.

In the field of rural communications, 102,000 miles of *kutcha* roads had been constructed.

TRAINING

Two more Orientation Training Centres have been set up at Mysore and Jabalpur, bringing the total number of O.T.C.s to seven.

The integrated training course of two years for the training of Village Level Workers, which was introduced last year, is being continued in 93 integrated training centres, run by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture; 36,557 V.L.W.s have been trained so far.

To ensure better mutual understanding, a certain percentage of seats in the Orientation Training Centres has been earmarked for the

Pradhans of Block Panchayat Samitis and Pramukhs of Zila Parishads.

Every State has taken steps to build up resources of the panchayats. Some States like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Madras, Mysore, Punjab and Rajasthan have assigned a definite percentage of the land revenue to the panchayats.

PANCHAYATI RAJ

Referring to Panchayati Raj, the Report says, while the broad pattern of legislation in different States has common features, details vary from one State to another. Rajasthan on October 2, 1959, covered the entire State with 232 Panchayat Samitis and 26 Zila Parishads. A system similar to the three-tier scheme of Rajasthan has also been introduced in Andhra Pradesh with effect from November, 1959. Madras, Mysore, Assam and Orissa have passed Acts which will establish a three-tier system during 1960-61. The new States of Maharashtra and Gujerat are expected to take up similar legislation after their formation. The Jammu & Kashmir Panchayat Act, 1958, enforced on April 1, 1959, provides for panchayats at the village level and Panchayat Advisory Boards at the Block level. Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh propose to introduce legislation during the Budget Session.

SERVICE CO-OPERATIVES

Fifteen thousand Service Co-operatives, had already come into existence by the end of November, 1959. If the present pace of expansion is maintained, the target of 39,000 such societies laid down in the programme for 1959-60 is likely to be achieved by the end of June, 1960.

The membership of village societies was 10.2 million at the end of 1957-58. This would have increased to about 12 million in 1958-59, and is expected to be about 18 million by 1960-61. At the beginning of the Second Plan, co-operatives supplied short and medium term credit of the order of Rs. 49.62 crores. The Second Plan fixed the target at Rs. 200 crores. It is estimated that about Rs. 125 crores were made available in 1958. By the end of 1960-61, the amount is likely to be Rs. 190 crores. Land Mortgage Banks advanced long-term loans to the extent of Rs. 6.35 crores during 1958-59, and are expected to advance Rs. 8 crores in 1959-60.

STORAGE FACILITIES

Marketing societies are now being encouraged to supply agricultural requisites, distribute essential commodities like sugar and kerosene, and take part in import and export of agricultural commodities. The societies are also being assisted for construction of godowns. Against the target of 5,500 godowns, about 3,150 had come up in 1958-59, and 2,630 more are expected by the end of the Plan period. Twentyfive per cent of their cost is given as subsidy and the remaining seventyfive per cent as loan.

Considerable progress has been made in the sphere of sugarcane processing. During the 1958-59 crushing season, the cooperative sugar factories produced 1.79 lakh tons of sugar, accounting for about 10 per cent of the country's estimated total production.

In order to strengthen the share capital of these factories, State Governments have contributed Rs. 334 lakhs up to 31-3-1959. During 1959-60, another Rs. 100 lakhs will be contributed.

PROCESSING UNITS

About 98 processing units of various types including cotton ginning and processing, groundnut decorticators, rice mills, jute baling, have been set up during the first three years of the Plan. Another 280 are expected to be added by the end of the Plan period.

A comprehensive programme of training and education has been organised both for non-officials and officials. By the end of 1959, about 3 lakh persons had been trained by touring parties of instructors. Senior Co-operative Officers are being trained in the co-operative school at Poona and intermediate personnel at five regional training centres. Institutions have also been set up for the training of Block level and junior personnel.

FROM THE STATES

It is most important that every Sarpanch and Pradhan should know what is happening outside his Block and State limits. Under this feature will be noticed Statewise, outstanding developments in the country as a whole.

ANDHRA PRADESH

The Andhra Pradesh Government have ordered that 50 per cent of the posts of Block Development Officers should be reserved for the personnel of the Revenue Department. Tahsildars who have put in at least one year of service in charge of a taluk and who are below 45 years and are able to serve as B.D.Os. for not less than two years are eligible for appointment as Block Development officers. Only such officers will be considered for selection who have shown sufficient zeal for development work. The remaining 50 per cent of the posts of Block Development officers are reserved for the personnel of the Development Departments, participating in the Community Development work such as various Extension officers.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

The Sadar Development Block in Bilaspur district has produced the best Gram Sevak in all Union territories this year. He is Sri Devraj, a village worker in the Block. The selection was made by the Central Selection Committee of the Union Government.

KERALA

The Government of Kerala is taking steps to introduce vegetable cultivation in their high schools through the organisation of Young Farmers' Clubs of school children. All the high schools are expected to be covered under the programme by the end of the Second Plan period. The Government will give grants up to 50% of the total expenditure on the maintenance of vegetable gardens and the balance will be raised through public contribution.

MYSORE

Bhagamandal in Coorg is an area comprising of 16 villages. Development schemes for the bee-keeping industry are run under five sub-stations. During the last honey season, production in the area totalled 28,168 lbs. The "Bhagamandal Bee-keepers' Cooperative Society" sold 22,337 lbs. of honey which fetched about Rs. 28,000. The activities of the Society cover the whole of Coorg.

PUNJAB

The question of proper utilisation of the agricultural land owned by the panchayats has been engaging the attention of the Punjab Government for some time. The Government has now appointed a Special officer of the rank of Chief Engineer to advise the panchayats on the proper cultivation and improvement of these lands.

* * *

The Panchayat Department in Punjab was merged with the Development Department with effect from 1st November, 1959. The Social Education Organisers working in the blocks were assigned additional duties as Panchayat officers and the B.D.Os. the additional duties as District Panchayat officers in the block.

* * *

The Punjab Cabinet has taken a decision about the mode of recruiting block development officers. Fifty-five per cent of the vacancies will be filled in by direct recruitment, 30 per cent by promotion and the rest by political sufferers. In direct recruitment, preference will be given to agricultural graduates and persons with practical experience in farming. Promotions will be made by a departmental committee.

* * *

The number of gram panchayats in the State during 1958-59 was 11,028. Their income during the year totalled Rs. 1.96 crores as against Rs. 1.75 crores in the preceding year. The total expenditure incurred by the panchayats during the year was Rs. 1.60 crores as against Rs. 1.35 crores of the previous year.

During the period, 13,410 criminal cases were instituted with gram panchayats

while the number of pending cases at the beginning of the year was 7,068. Of these, the panchayats decided as many as 13,744 cases, that is, 67.38 per cent of the total cases pending before it. The Panchayats decided 18,715 civil and revenue cases during that year and decisions in 99 per cent of the cases were acceptable to the litigants.

Important achievements of panchayats during the period were construction of 1,240 new school buildings, the opening of 19 first-aid and 45 maternity centres and 547 new panchayat ghars, the building of 1,689 miles of village roads and 374 children parks.

RAJASTHAN

There has been an increasing demand for minor irrigation works in Rajasthan. In response to this demand and to ensure planned development, the Assistant Engineers and Surveyors working in the blocks were directed to conduct surveys of their areas and formulate suitable schemes under the programme.

* * *

Baswa, a fairly large village in Bandikui district of Rajasthan has slowly and steadily become a prominent co-operative pottery centre in the State. Nearly 300 families inhabiting Baswa and the neighbouring villages have joined the Baswa Mittee Bartan Utpadak Sahkari Samiti. The Society was organised and registered in July, 1957, with a membership of 17 local potters and a share capital of Rs. 1,020. Baswa itself has 41 potter families and 50 highly skilled artisans well-versed in the manufacture of high class water pots, drinking bowls, hubble-bubble chimneys, cups, flowerpots and vases etc. They prepare high quality pottery out of the local clay which is best suited for the purpose.

UTTAR PRADESH

The Government of Utta Pradesh has delegated increased powers to the Panchayats. Among other things, the Panchayats will be entrusted with the execution of new irrigation and drainage up to a limit of Rs. 7,500 for each project. In the active blocks, the Panchayats will have two functional sub-committees: (1) to look after the production programmes, and (2) to look after the welfare programmes. The Block Development Committees of these blocks will also have two similar functional sub-committes.

* * *

VILLAGERS of Sabadpur, 6 miles from Bulandshahr, worked round the clock for days to pave lanes and streets of the village with bricks. Muslim residents of the village took an oath that they would not see the moon of the Id unless every lane was paved with 'kharanjas'. Hectic activity followed the strange oath. It was a happy Id for the residents since the work was completed before the dead-line. A function was held on the following Sunday to celebrate the event.

DELHI

PRACTICALLY all the villages in the Delhi Union Territory have been brought under the fold of cooperatives.

JAMMU & KASHMIR

THE JAMMU and Kashmir Government has sanctioned Rs. 21,000 as subsidy and Rs. 315,000 as loan for cooperative societies in the State. It has also sanctioned investment of Rs. 80,000 in share capital of the State Cooperative Bank and Rs. 12,000 for training officers of the Cooperative Department outside the State.

MADRAS

SEVENTY-EIGHT cooperative farming societies of different types have been registered in the Madras State during the year 1959. The number of landless agriculturists in these societies are 2,645 and those of marginal landholders, 99.

WEST BENGAL

THE DEVELOPMENT Department in West Bengal has evolved bullock driven pumps for irrigation purposes. These pumps were successfully tried out in farms and were attracting attention of progressive local farmers.

Endurance Test

YOUNG AND OLD AT WORK

Renovation of old tanks now-a-days is an important activity in the villages.

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